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DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CEN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [NU](#)
SUBJECT: CAMINO CRISTIANO LEADER DIGS IN HEELS OVER PLC

REF: MANAGUA 0709

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli. Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

¶1. (C) Camino Cristiano (CCN) leader/National Assembly Deputy, Reverend Guillermo Osorno, appears likely to formalize an alliance with the Liberal Constitutional Party (PLC). In his April 27 meeting with Ambassador to discuss the feasibility of multi-party primaries (Reftel), Osorno opined that it is too late in the game for primaries, but perhaps negotiations remain an option. He related that the CCN had recently signed a letter of intent to ally with the PLC, but the agreement is not yet formal and his party still has time to change its mind.

¶2. (C) Osorno claimed that he is no fan of PLC leader Arnoldo Aleman and his inner circle and doubts their sincerity that they have promised to run a clean government. However, he argued that only the PLC, with its experience, party machinery, and vast infrastructure can beat FSLN presidential candidate Daniel Ortega. Moreover, the PLC enjoys representation on the Supreme Electoral Council (CSE) and thus can defend its votes, while the other democratic parties, like the CCN, APRE, and Eduardo Montealegre's ALN, are "helpless."

¶3. (C) Osorno suggested that the Embassy could strike a deal with the PLC that would lead to Aleman's eventual loss of control of the party. In his view, our latest visa revocation of a PLC member (National Assembly Deputy Donald Lacayo, who heads the Assembly's Ethics Committee) is working against U.S. interests because the PLC is now less likely to cooperate on legislative issues. The Ambassador replied that we have endeavored for years to distance Aleman from the PLC and he has been intransigent, as has his inner circle. He warned Osorno that allying with Aleman is a mistake and suggested that Osorno would be better off supporting a democratic alternative.

¶4. (C) Comment: President Bolanos tells us the Osorno is one the "most expensive" National Assembly votes, expecting that in return for his vote on a particular issue, three or four of his relatives will land government jobs. Osorno's party is in large part a family operation (the three Camino Cristiano members who accompanied him for the meeting with the Ambassador are all his relatives.) The other Camino Cristiano Assembly Deputy, Delia Arellano, has openly sided with Eduardo Montealegre and votes with his ALN-PC bloc. If the Camino Cristiano allies with Aleman, such an alignment might not represent much of a loss for Montealegre, as Osorno's (whose nickname is "soborno," or "bribe") reputation

is clearly not an asset for a candidate running on a clean government platform. End Comment.

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